

P 101239Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1749
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 001297

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2018

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SUBJECT: NEW PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR TO THE UAE A LONG-TIME BHUTTO ALLY

Classified by Ambassador Richard Olson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a November 9 courtesy call, incoming Pakistani Ambassador Khursheed Ahmed Junejo described his long-term affiliation with the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, describing himself as the mayor of her town, and a party confidant during a "20 year" association. He claimed so many trips between Pakistan and Dubai during her residence here that his time on the ground in the UAE must add up to six months or more. He claims to have been a conduit with her constituents. He continues his allegiance to the PPP (yet referred rather formalistically to President Asif Zardari, as if his deeper loyalties were to Bhutto).

¶2. (C) Describing priorities for the November 17 Friends of Pakistan meeting in Abu Dhabi (for which an agenda has yet to circulate) Junejo said security (170 members of the PPP are "targeted" by terrorists) and economic stability are key discussion topics. The Pakistani delegation might also brief on education and health care, with the goal of offering a "correct picture" of ground truth. Stating that his job kept him busy looking after 850,000 Pakistanis in the UAE, he said the community projected a "good mood" although many of its members faced hardships back home -- he highlighted infrastructure challenges in the FATA areas (seeming to suggest that the Friends of Pakistan might help with basic facilities). He cautioned against further instability in the only nuclear-armed Muslim nation and cited recent Pakistani actions against cash couriers operating between Pakistan and the UAE.

¶3. (C) BIO NOTES: Ambassador Khursheed Ahmed Junejo, born 11 October 1954, offered a bio listing the following:
--- 1973 Director NGO Social Welfare
--- 1974 Secretary General, Student Union, Sindh University
--- 1979 Chairman, Union Council, Dhamrah Taluka and District Larkana
--- 1983 Chairman Union Council
--- 1987 Member District Council Larkana
--- 1988 Information Secretary, PPP
--- 1993 (Nov) to 1996 (Nov) Consultant to the PM
--- 2002-07 District Nazim Larkana
--- 2000 to present: Member SZABIST Board of Trustees

He replaces an Ambassador who was a clear and outspoken supporter of Pervez Musharraf (and who continues to reside in the UAE). Given strong historical ties to the UAE, this posting is likely politically and economically important to the GOP.

OLSON